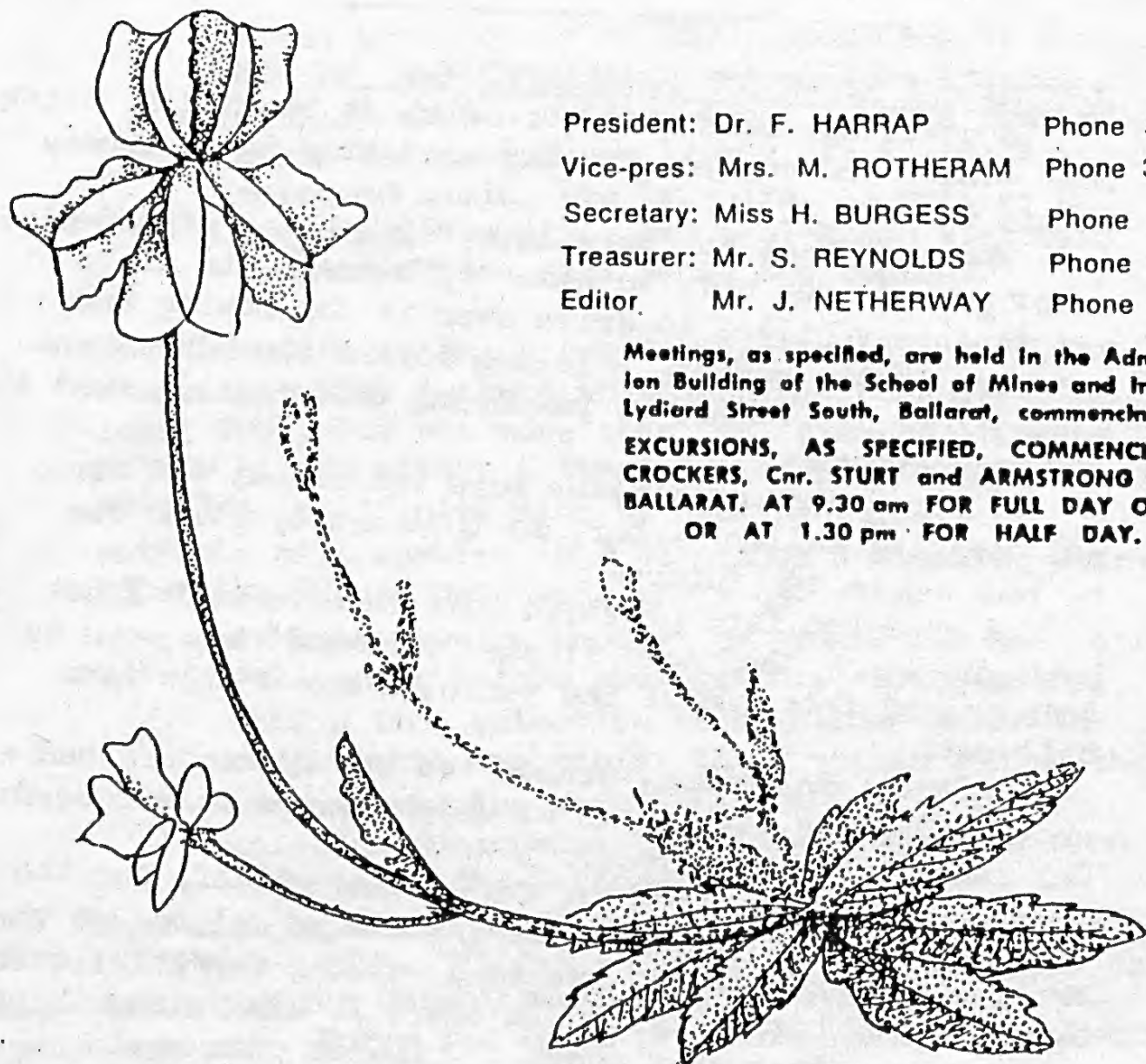


Field Naturalists Club of Ballarat

AUGUST, 1982.

EXCURSION - NEWS SHEET

- Meeting 6th August - "Sex Life of Plants".
Speaker, Mr. G. Sitch.
- Meeting 3rd September - "A Trip to Northern India".
Speaker, Mr. J. Brisbane.
- Excursion 8th August - Sunday - Full Day - Castlemaine Area.
Leader, Mr. G. Sitch.
- Excursion 5th September - Sunday - Half Day - Dereel.
Leader Mr. L. Fink.



President: Dr. F. HARRAP	Phone 30 1651
Vice-pres: Mrs. M. ROTHERAM	Phone 31 4054
Secretary: Miss H. BURGESS	Phone 31 2210
Treasurer: Mr. S. REYNOLDS	Phone 32 7721
Editor: Mr. J. NETHERWAY	Phone 32 7296

Meetings, as specified, are held in the Administration Building of the School of Mines and Industries, Lydiard Street South, Ballarat, commencing 8 pm.

EXCURSIONS, AS SPECIFIED, COMMENCE FROM CROCKERS, Cnr. STURT and ARMSTRONG STREETS, BALLARAT. AT 9.30 am FOR FULL DAY OUTINGS, OR AT 1.30 pm FOR HALF DAY.

NEW MEMBER - The President welcomed Mr. David Handscombe, wishing him a long and fruitful association with the Club.

REPORTS

Mr. K. Hammond - a black-faced cuckoo-shrike in his garden every day.

Miss H. Burgess - seemingly thousands of silver gulls congregating on Lake Wendouree.

Dr. F. Harrap - Gilbert's whistlers and sitellas at Mosquito Flat, Hooded robins, flame robins, speckled warblers, Jacky Winters, yellow-tailed thornbills, at Maldon State Forest, where he also saw bronzewing pigeons grazing amongst Eastern rosellas.

WORKING BEE EXCURSION TO CLARKESDALE, 4th JULY.

A small but keen band turned up at the B.O.C. block near Linton and enjoyed the day assisting Roger Thomas in his work.

The main task was burying a large black siphon-pipe under ground, not only to hide it, but also to allow maintenance vehicles to drive over it for mowing and watering in the summer. Yellow robins and blue wrens seemed keen to assist, by pattering their little feet to firm the ground!

Other chores undertaken were rolling up old wire, and clearing fallen timber, so that nearby gorse can be removed in the future.

A good hot fire provided some members with a hot barbeque lunch, and some of the "firewood" was seen to "disappear" into one of the vehicles for a ride into Ballarat.

After a welcome afternoon-tea break, members had a short walk, the highlights of which were a male Powerful Owl and a speckled warbler.

Many thanks, from Mr. Clarke and myself, for the work done. Don't forget you are always welcome at the Reserve - September for wattles, October for wildflowers, November for birds; although there is always something to see, no matter what month. Thanks once again.

Roger Thomas.

1982 AUSTRALIAN BIRD CALL IMITATION CHAMPIONSHIP

ARE YOU A BIRD CALLER?

If so, you might be Australia's champion !

The Maryborough Field Naturalists' Club invites all "bird callers" to enter the 1982 Australian Bird Call Imitation Championship at Maryborough's Salvation Army Hall on Saturday night, 28th August. The Club is presenting this unique and entertaining Championship as part of the City's Golden Wattle Festival.

Total prize money of \$500 (sponsored by the Golden Wattle Festival Committee) will be awarded at the Judges' absolute discretion. The winner will carry off a handsome trophy, featuring Australia's renowned mimic, the Lyrebird, as well as a perpetual trophy. Two well-known Victorian ornithologists will judge the contest.

The Championship Rules are straightforward. Each contestant MUST imitate the Laughing Kookaburra, and at least FOUR, but not more than TEN, other Australian native birds, within a time slot of FOUR MINUTES. No whistles, artificial aids or backing permitted! All entrants will combine in a hilarious Kookaburra Chorus after the Judges have made their decision.

An entertaining support programme has been arranged. Well-known nature photographer, Eric duBourg, will show a fine selection of his slides while the contestants are tuning their voices behind the scenes, and the Ragamuffin Band will render colonial music while the Judges deliberate on the efforts of the performers.

This will be a real family fun night, very moderately priced at \$1 for adults, \$3 for a family and 50 cents for children. Entry forms for the Championship will be available at our August meeting. Entry fee is \$2 per contestant, and closing date is 25th August.

BIRD WATCHING NEAR LAKE CARGELIGO. N. S. W.

Lake Cargeligo is about 2 hours by road N.E. of Griffith. The lake was constructed in 1902, on a bend of the Lachlan River. It has surface area of 1440 hectares and is used to supplement river flows during dry spells. The local vegetation is predominantly native pine and mallee flora and the bird list is said to total 180 species. To the N.W. of Lake Cargeligo (population about 1100) is the Round Hill Nature Reserve, about 40 Km away and dissected by the trans-Australian railway line. The vegetation is again mallee types of eucalypt with wattles and large areas of open parkland with native pine. The bird list for the reserve is around 120 species.

On the way up in July, we stopped one night in Griffith and then on to Lake Cargeligo through the Cocopara National Park. Unfortunately the track I chose to walk along had been burnt over fairly recently. Even so there was a good range of species with a blue faced honeyeater in a tree next to the car when I returned. Feral goats are a problem and I saw one adult and kid working their way up a cliff face.

I don't think that I've ever seen so many birds by the roadside as I saw in the next two hours. Groups of apostle birds, crested pigeons and various doves, blue bonnet, mulga and ringneck parrots and even the occasional duck.

Lake Cargeligo supports three pubs (one doing counter teas), two motels (the one we stayed in is next to the lake with excellent accommodation, enormous breakfasts and very friendly owners) and two licensed clubs, one with an excellent Chinese restaurant. So - well fed and well housed and with the flu well restrained, all augured well for a good week's bird watching.

And a good week it was, with over a hundred and ten species all told and just on ninety in the vicinity of Lake Cargeligo. My Australian total is reasonably large so that the three new birds for the week were a pleasant reward. The highlights, as with most good birdwatching holidays, were as much from the old favourites as from the newcomers.

A male mistletoe bird in the river gums near the Cargeligo weir; many wedge tailed eagles, one perched on a dead tree on the edge of Lake Brewster; my first spotted bower bird with the lilac-pink patch on the back of the neck catching the light; a highly disturbed and disturbing emu on the track (disturbing not only me but also a mallee fowl); a large number of mallee honeyeaters: singing, striped, yellow plumed, etc. Probably the high spot of the holiday was a bird I had seen only once before in the car headlights - a spotted nightjar. The bird is described as being not uncommon in suitable habitats, which probably explains why I saw two different birds in a matter of twenty minutes.

I put the first bird up about four times before we finally parted company. I saw it well in flight and again flattened to the ground as I approached within about 15 metres.

The illustrations in Slater and in Pizzey in no way do it justice. A grey and brown bird, it is streaked and spotted with black with a white band across the throat and white lines leading back to the eyes. Disturbed, it flies silently for a short distance, displaying two prominent white patches towards the wing tips. It appeared to be very much bigger than the length of 30 cm would suggest.

Certainly a good area for birds and one we must visit again.

F. Harrap.

EXCURSION TO CASTLEMAINE, SUNDAY 8th AUGUST.

We shall leave Crocker's corner as usual at 9.30 am, and are to meet Mr. Sith at 10.30 am. in Guildford, just on the Vaughan road.

Those going for the afternoon only, can meet the group at the Fryerstown cricket ground at 1.00 pm.

2nd JULY MEETING - SPEAKER MR. JOHN SEEBECK - POTOROOS.

Potoroos were one of the earliest of the marsupials encountered by European man, and were probably the first marsupial to be bred in captivity outside its native shores.

There are three species - *Potorous platyops*, the broad-faced potoroo, last reported in 1895, and now thought to be extinct; *P. tridactylus*, meaning three-toed even though there are four - this is the common potoroo found around the Victorian coast and in Tasmania; and *P. longipes*, the potoroo with the long foot.

Longipes was first discovered in June 1967 when an adult female was caught in a dog trap. In May the next year an adult male was found dead on the highway at Bellbird, about 45 kilometres away. It was not until 1978 that live specimens were successfully trapped, and now *longipes* as well as *tridactylus* are being bred and studied at Serendip.

Essentially a coastal animal, *tridactylus* occurs in six different regions - South-western, Grampians, Otways, Western Port, Wilson's Promontory and East Gippsland, all but the Grampians being coastal. They are present in a number of conservation areas and appear to be under no threat at this time.

The chief enemy is probably man, with his clearing of habitat. The potoroo favours open forest with a heathy understory containing for example, *xanthorrhoea* and sedges in wetter areas.

Trapping and study of *tridactylus* is now being carried out at Naringal East on a property left to the people of Victoria by Mr. Ralph Illidge.

The area of about forty hectares is forested land with a cover of eucalypts, ti-tree, acacia, bracken, sedges and ferns.

Other small animals include bush rats, antechinus, and bandicoots. Wire mesh cages are used, with a mixture of rolled oats, honey and peanut butter as a most effective bait. Some, especially partial to this mixture have been captured one hundred times!"

The potoroo, like the kangaroo, can have one young still suckling having left the pouch, one suckling in the pouch, and an embryo in the womb. In ideal conditions the potoroo could produce a maximum of ten off-spring in their life-span of five to six years.

Potoroos dig holes in the ground for food, including grubs and bulbs. They sit on their hind feet and manipulate even the smallest particles of food with their front feet. In captivity they will eat kitchen scraps.

The many questions asked were indicative of the members' interest in this lecture, and showed that meetings at which our small native animals are discussed are most popular.

Mrs. Kierath ably thanked Mr. Seebeck on our behalf.

L. Fink.

DAVIS' TOURS

The 6 DAY INFORMATIVE HOLIDAY TOUR of the Grampians and the Western District has been cancelled due to lack of firm bookings.

Davis' would like to develop these tours or similar Ballarat based ones, and would like to know if our members are interested.

The subject will probably be aired at our August meeting.

EARLY SPRINGTIME GET TOGETHER OF VICTORIAN FIELD
NATURALISTS CLUBS ASSOCIATION AT BENDIGO.

AUGUST 28 - 29, 1982.

A bus has been chartered to leave Melbourne for Bendigo at 8.30 a.m. Saturday, August 28th, from Flinders Street (outside the Gas & Fuel Co.).

PROGRAMME

SATURDAY, AUGUST 28th - 1.00 p.m.

Meeting Place - Near the Bendigo Post Office.
An excursion to the Whipstick will be held in the afternoon.

7.30 p.m. the proposed venue is the
Veterinary Laboratories Meeting Room,
Echuca Road, Epsom.
There will be a general meeting and
slide evening, and presentation of
Honorary Membership Certificate of the
F.N.C.V. to Mr. William Perry of
Bendigo.
There will be discussion about the
threat to the Whipstick from mining.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 29th -

Meet at Post Office at 9.00 a.m. It is proposed to
visit another area of the Whipstick.

Picnic Lunch before departure for home in the
afternoon.

For further information re Caravan Parks - Camping
grounds, Motels and Hotels please phone or write to:-

The Secretary of the Bendigo F.N.C.
Mr. Laurie Leeson,
76 Lawson Street, Bendigo.
Phone (054) 430 521.